

TAYLOR SHELLY

HARTFORD, CT

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE TESTIMONY

FEBRUARY 17, 2017

H.B. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM
ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR

RE: DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, CONNECTICUTICORPS LINE ITEM

Distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Taylor Shelly and I am here to testify in support of restoring the cut of \$125,458 to the ConnectiCorps line item in the Department of Labor's budget.

I urge you to continue funding ConnectiCorps which in turn funds Serve Here CT at the current amount. I believe this program is important for helping millennials like me find fulfilling, professional careers in Connecticut. Furthermore, I believe this program is unique in its ability to equip young professionals to become lifelong members of the local Connecticut community. Let me explain from my personal experience.

I moved to Connecticut from Texas in 2014 without a professional network, family member, or friend in the region. I moved here to expand my professional career in an industry that is prominent and almost exclusive to the northeast, as an intern for the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center.

With jobs being difficult to find for a young professional, I had no intentions of staying in Connecticut after my year-long internship, either planning on moving to NYC, back to TX, or FL where I had previously worked for Disney. Nine months later the O'Neill and I were interested in making me and my position full time, but creating a new position proved fiscally challenging. We then learned of Serve Here CT, and with their support the O'Neill was

able to make me full time. This began my first professional job in the arts as a Marketing and Communications Associate at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford. This position combined my love for theater and gave me valuable development and management skills. It was the perfect fit and I wouldn't have found it without Serve Here CT. Additionally, Serve Here CT is allowing me to pursue further education, which I hope to begin this fall at UCONN, continuing to expand my professional career and my roots in CT. An opportunity I would not have had had it not been for Serve Here CT.

As a fellow, I had the opportunity to network with individuals across professions who have a passion for the arts and community building in Connecticut. It was very insightful and eye opening. Networking with the other fellows helped guide my ideas of what I was looking to gain from my career. My time with Serve Here CT also taught me the integral effect a quality theater can have on a neighborhood.

I'm happy to report that today I have continued to advance in my career and I am now the Digital Marketing Coordinator at the Bushnell Performing Arts Center in Hartford.

Two years ago I could never have imagined progressing so quickly and so far in my profession. Furthermore, I could never have imagined myself planting and committing to Connecticut. I'm a Texan after all and before Serve Here CT had little reason to stay in the area.

But now both my career in the arts and my future as a longtime, committed Connecticut resident are strong and growing stronger.

In light of my experiences, I hope that you will support the important work of Serve Here CT by continuing to fund this unique and important program. Connecticut needs my generation, if you don't support us and find ways to empower us in our careers its likely that we will choose to live and work in other parts of the country.

Sincerely,
Taylor Shelly
2015/2016 Serve Here CT Fellow

Digital Marketing Coordinator at the Bushnell Performing Arts Center